11.

The Holy Choice:

OR,

AITH'S TRIUMPH

OVER ALL

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A

SERMON

ched in St. *Maries* in *Scilly*, Oct. 14. 1677.

Nich. Phillips, Twice Chaplain to His Majesties Garrison there.

Tendred at the *Council-Table*, Jan. 23. 1679.

me Miserum Sanctum, quam Prosperum Peccatorem. Aug.

t taketh not up his Cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me, Matth. 10. 38.

Printed for *Benjamin Harris* at the *Stationers Arms* in the *Piazza* under the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1679.

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TO THE

PATRONAGE

OF THOSE

Pair of Sacred Sisters

Truth and Justice.

THough the one of you be strong and invincible, and never fails in the end to get the Conquest and Prevail, yet by reason of the slackness of the other in affording you Succor and Defence, you seem many times quite vanquished and laid in the dust.

That my Doctrine is grounded on the Foundation of Truth and Verity, will appear most plainly by the Sacred Records thereof, the Holy Scriptures. And I have Faith to believe that I shall in due time, and when Patience hath Perfected her Work, have Justice to Relieve and Right me; And that from him into whose Hand God hath Committed the Sword of it, our most Sacred Soverign, whom God preserve long to Reign over us; and still mightily and miraculously Protect and Defend from all the Devilish Plots and Conspiracies of His Enemies.

THE Garrison Souldiers at Scilly, when they received their pay, used always to give something towards the relief of the Poor; which Money, as appears by their several accounts, was delivered unto the Church-Wardens, and disposed of by them.

After Lieut. Crudge came to Command the Garrison,

The first pay-day, it was paid unto the Warden, and disposed of by them.

The second, it was taken up by Lieut. Crudge, and imployed by him to pay for working up his Majesties Iron, to make Harth-grates for the Guard-houses.

The third, the Pay-master of the Garrison, Sir William Godolphin's Agent there, happened to be Warden, and having the Money in his Hand refused, upon the Command of Lieut. Crudge, to deliver it unto him; telling him that it was the Poors Money, and that he being Warden, would imploy it to the use of the Poor, and give an account of it to the Parish, as his Predecessors had done.

Upon the Wardens refusal to deliver up the Poors Money, to be imployed contrary to the intent of the Donors, and former practise, the Lieutenant sends a Guard for him, puts him into the Dungeon, or Hole belonging to the Garrison, there kept him two Days and Nights to the great danger of his Life; and would not let him out till he had delivered up the Money.

Nich. Phillips Minister there, hearing of these differences about the Money given at the present pay-day, took an occasion to inquire how the Money given at the precedent pay-day was bestowed; and was told that a small parcel of it was put into the Poor Mans box, and that the rest was imployed as is foresaid.

Whereupon meeting as he went to Morning-Prayer, Saturday, October 13. with the Serjeant, who was ordered by the Lieutenant to require the Money from the Pay-master, and

and to pay with it the Smith that wrought up the Kings Iron.

He told him, that he heard he had put Money into the Poor Mans box, and asked him what Money it was? He answered, That it was the Poors Money, the Money given to the Poor on such a pay-day. He demanded of him again, what was become of the rest? He answered, That it was imployed about the use aforesaid.

Thereupon the Minister endeavoured to make him sensible of the unlawfulness of such an act, and how great a sin it was to imploy unto Secular, what was given to Sacred and Pious uses. All that he could say, was to alleadge the Command of his Officer, and that he could not help it; if he had not done it he, should be punished. To whom the Minister said no more at present, than that he had been better taught.

After Evening-Prayer, that day, the Smith that wrought up the King's Iron, and received the Poors Money for so doing, came unto the Ministers house, with whom the Minister began to expostulate about the unlawfulness of such an act. He replied, That he had several times denyed the Serjeant to work up the Iron, and that he did not meddle with it, till the Lieutenant himself came down into his Shop and Commanded him to do it.

The serious Consideration of the great danger men would bring their Souls into, by yielding obedience unto unlawful Commands, for the preservation of their Bodies; kept the Minister restless that Night, and made him rise at midnight to add to his Sermon which he had prepared for the next day, this seasonable Paragraph so marked [* in the Sermon at large.

Which though it hath drawn upon him infinite Trouble and Vexation, and caused him to be Traduced and Slandered to the whole World almost, yet would he not have left it unsaid for a thousand Worlds. And he doth glory more in it than he doth in any thing that ever he did, or said; it having freed him from the guilt of the Blood of those Souls which by the contempt of the Doctrine delivered in it hath been spil-

The

The Holy Choice, &c.

Heb. 11. 15. *Chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.*

FAith, though challenged by ſome to be the peculiar Treaſure of Gods younger Sons, is notwithſtanding the general portion of all his adopted ones; and not only under the Goſpel, but under the Law; yea, and before the Law too, was this Grace given to the Sons of men.

Abel and *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Abraham* are by the Apoſtle in the precedent Verſes ſaid to have *walked by Faith*, even before the Law. And *Moſes* the Lawgiver himſelf, is here in the very precedent Verſe, ſaid to have *walked by Faith. By Faith*, Moſes, *when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaohs *Daughter.*

Among all the noble Chieftains of Faith that preceded the Law, *Abraham* hath the firſt place aſſigned him. He it was that gave Believers a juſt Title to the promiſed Land, and hath the Honour given him to be called *The Father of the Faithful.*

Among all the faithful Worthies under the Law, *Moſes* ſtands formoſt, He, he it was that brought up the *Houſhold of Faith* from

one

out of the House of Bondage, Conducted them in safety through the *Perilous Wilderness*, shewed them the *Promised Land*, and gave a peerless and an unparallell'd Testimony of his Faith, by *choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the Children of God, than to enjoy*, &c.

But before I proceed to speak of this peerless and unparallell'd Pattern of his Faith, manifested most clearly by this his seeming foolish and miserable, but indeed wise and happy Choyce; I shall first, by God's Gracious Assistance, shew you the History and Manner of his Life, before he come to Years of Discretion, to make this Choice for himself.

His Life was no sooner given him by a Gracious God, than it was sought to be taken away from him by a Cruel and Merciless Man.

His tender Non-Age, though it wanted not a heart to receive Danger-daunting Faith; yet it wanted a Hand to wield so massie and weighty a Shield: Some other ones Buckler then must now protect and defend him, or else the same hand that delivers him from the Womb, must also lay him in the Tomb: For thus saith *Pharaoh to the Hebrew Midwives*, Exod. 1. 16. *If it be a Man-child, kill him.*

[* *And here from the Piety and Courage of the* Hebrew *Midwives, who feared more to offend God than Man, and who would not upon the Command of a Tyrannous, Oppressing King, act against the express Command of God, and imbrue their hands in innocent Blood, must I (if I will deliver my own Soul from Blood-guiltiness) take the Courage and Boldness to tell you, That it is not lawful nor safe for your Souls, in all Cases, to obey the Commands of your Lawful Superiors.*

Indeed in things not forbidden them by God, no Souls are more subject unto the higher powers, than are God's faithful Servants and such, as fear him. But when mens Commands clash with Gods Divine Precepts, and they enjoin what he forbids, they must then stand more in fear to offend him who can kill their Souls, and cast them into Hell, than them who can but kill their Bodies, or cast them into some dark Dungeon or Hole.

And a President for so doing, we have not only given us in the Gospel,

Gospel, by the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour; who being forbidden by the *Jewish Sanhedrim* of Priests and Elders, *to speak unto the People in the Name of Christ*, boldly told them to their teeth, that *it was better to obey God than man*, Acts 5. 29. but also several Presidents for it in the Law.

1. By these *Hebrew Midwives*, Exod. 1. who refused, when commanded by King *Pharaoh*, to kill the *Hebrew* Male-Children.

2. By the Souldiers of King *Saul*, 1 Sam. 22. 17. who refused upon his Command, to fall upon the Priests of the Lord, and chose rather to expose their own throats to the fury of an incensed King, than imbrue their hands in the Blood of Gods Priests.

3. By *Shadrach*, &c. *Dan.* 3. who refused, when Commanded by King *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *fall down and worship the Golden Image which he had set up*, and that under a heavier penalty than casting into a dark Dungeon; even of being *cast into the midst of a burning fiery Furnace*; and chose rather to be cast *into the midst of the burning fiery Furnace*, than to worship any other God but the True and Living one.

4. By *Daniel*, Chap. 6. who, when forbidden by King *Darius*, to present a Petition to any other, either God or man, than himself, *for the space of thirty days*, under the penalty of being *cast into the Den of hungry Lions*, obeyed him not; but *thrice every day* on his bended knees presented his Supplications and Prayers unto God.

And if the Commands of Kings, who are the supream and highest Powers on Earth, may not, when unlawful, be performed by those who will manifest themselves to be Gods faithful Servants, and such as fear him; then much less may the Lawless Commands of those that are of inferior power, and subordinate unto them, be obeyed of them.

And though *Beggars* (as saith the Proverb) *when set on horseback, will ride*---and men (saith Experience) not used to it, will grow giddy and light-headed, when set on high places. And though none are more apt to take more power unto themselves, than of right belongs unto them, than those that have least committed unto them, and are of the lowest and most inferior degree of subordinate Officers; yet to fear more to offend such,

than to offend God, is the loweſt degree of Baſeneſs and Cowardiſe; yea, to manifeſt our ſelves to be more weak than Women: for there are higher than they, and ſeveral degrees above them here on Earth, unto whom, when wronged by them, we may have recourſe for Juſtice, and need not let our Faith put our Patience to the trouble to wait till the laſt great Day of Judgment come, for Redreſs,

For as far as the power of God exceeds the power of the King, ſo far doth the power of the King exceed the power of his ſubordinate Officers; and as when oppreſſed and burdened by the King, we may make our Appeal unto God, who though he hath allowed no power on Earth to call him to an Account for his Actions, & to puniſh him; yet hath reſerved to himſelf a power ſo to do; and hath, as ſaith the Prophet, *Iſa.* 30. *ult. provided a Tophet* hereafter, a Priſon large and ſtrong enough to hold and puniſh the greateſt Monarch that ever was upon the Earth: ſo when wronged and injured by his ſubordinate Officers, we may make our Appeal unto the King, who will undoubtedly right us and puniſh them, if they exceed the Bounds and Limits of their Commiſſions, and uſurp more power over us than he gives them.

And though no ſubordinate Officers are wont to uſurp more power unto themſelves, and to exceed the Bounds and Limits of their Commiſſions, than thoſe that are employed in Military Commands, who uſually take an Arbitrary Power unto themſelves, make their Will their Law; and when queſtioned with a *Quo Warranto*, clap their hands on their Swords, as if the wearing of them would bear them out in whatever they do.

And though none are uſually more cowardly and baſe, and ready to obey unlawful Commands, than thoſe that ſhould be moſt couragious and valiant in defence of Truth and Innocency (Souldiers) who ignorantly think, That becauſe they are bound in the courſe of their Military Duty and Service, to be obedient to the Commands of their Superiour Officers, they are bound to obey them in all things; to do and ſay whatever they will have them, be it never ſo falſe and unjuſt; and ſtand more in fear to be caſt into a dark Dungeon or Hole, than into the Fire of Hell.

Yet Officers and Souldiers ſure, if they will manifeſt themſelves

ſelves to be Chriſtian ones, have better Preſidents given them in the Holy Scriptures.

And taught are all Officers by the Third Captain of Fifty, which K. *Ahaziah* ſent to apprehend the Prophet *Eliah*, 2 Kin. 1. not to behave themſelves as did the two former Captains, arrogantly and inſolently, but meekly and humbly, in the execution of their Office.

And taught are all Souldiers, by the Souldiers of King *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 22. 17. not to obey the Commands of their Kings and Generals, much leſs of their inferior and loweſt ſort of Officers, when they are unlawful, and contradict and oppoſe thoſe of their God.

And, if praiſed upon Record in Scripture, are thoſe Jewiſh Officers and Souldiers, who behaved themſelves reverently and reſpectfully towards the Prieſts and Prophets of the Lord, and refuſed to lay violent hands on Sacred perſons, and ſuch as were Conſecrated unto Gods Service; can a Prieſt or a Prophet chuſe but condemn ſuch Chriſtian Officers and Souldiers as make no conſcience of laying violent hands on Sacred things, and ſuch as are Dedicated to pious and Charitable Uſes, and in ſo doing, dare preſume even to [illegible] God himſelf?

Whatever is g[illegible] the poor, *is lent to the Lord*, ſayes *Solomon*, Prov. 19. 1[illegible] whatever is Dedicated to Pious and Religious uſes, is, as [illegible] *Paul*, Heb. 13. 16. *Unto God a Sacrifice well pleaſing and acce[illegible]*. And therefore to take away that which is given to the poor, and to imploy in Secular, what was Dedicated to Sacred Uſes, muſt of neceſſity be a defrauding, and robbing of God, a thing moſt unpleaſing and abominable unto him.

Lawful I grant it is for men to do what they will with their own; and when they have Money, they may employ it as they pleaſe. But when they have once Dedicated it unto God, and given it to pious and charitable uſes, to re-aſſume it again, to command, employ, or give conſent to have it employed in any ſecular or prophane uſe, is the very higheſt point of Robbery and Injuſtice, no leſs Crime ſure than Sacriledge.

And that I preach now no new Divinity, and ſuch as is forged

in mine own idle Brain, but on Ancient, Catholick, Apoſtolick Truth, you will moſt plainly perceive, if you will be but pleaſed to look into the 5th. Ch. of the *Acts* of the Holy Apoſtles; there you will find it written, That when *Ananias* had dedicated a certain portion of Money to the Service of God and his Church, and afterward taken away a certain part of it to employ otherwiſe, he was moſt ſharply reprehended, and moſt ſeverely and exemplarily puniſhed for it. And thus doth the Apoſtle St. *Peter* rattle him for it: *v.* 3, 4. *Ananias*, ſaid he, why haſt thou given ſuch way unto Satan; and ſuffered him ſo far to work upon thy heart, as to draw thee to the committing of ſo heinous a ſin, as is the *Lying unto the Holy Ghoſt*; and the ſeeking to cozen and defraud God, by *keeping back part of that Money* which thou pretendeſt wholly to dedicate to his Service? Before thou didſt ſell thy Land, *was it not in thine own power* to do with it what thou wouldſt, to ſell it, or not to ſell it, to give it, or keep it? Nay, after thou hadſt ſold it, was it not in thine own power to do what thou wouldeſt with the Money thou madeſt of it? But after thou hadſt once dedicated it unto God, to be employed in the Service of his Church, and towards the Relief of his poor diſtreſſed Members, than to re-aſſume it again, and employ it in any other uſe; was, I muſt tell thee, a moſt heinous provoking ſin, and will not fail to draw down a ſudden and an exemplary Judgment upon thee.

And ſure the ſudden, and the moſt ſevere Judgment we here find to be executed upon *Ananias*, for keeping back part of that which he pretended to dedicate wholly to Gods Service, and the Relief of his Diſtreſſed Members, ſhould make all thoſe that have in any kind been guilty of this moſt heinous ſin (& either by commanding, acting, councelling or approving, have had a hand in employing of that to Secular which (as appears upon Record) was given to pious and charitable uſes, even for the Relief of the poor) to tremble and quake, and fear, wherever they are, that ſome ſudden, fearful and exemplary Judgment will fall upon them, and by a timely and ſpeedy repentance and ſatisfaction, to endeavour to prevent that which is worſe than the putting into a dark Dungeon or Hole, even the caſting into the bottomleſs Pit of Hell.

Having

Having thus from the great Piety and Courage which the Hebrew *Midwives shewed, in refusing upon the Command of King* Pharaoh, *to become instrumental in taking away of* Moses's *life, taken the Courage and Boldness to deliver unto you this Ancient, Catholick, Apostolick Doctrine; That it is not lawful for you in all Causes to obey the Commands of your Lawful Superiors, and given you these most seasonable Soul-saving Reproofs, Cautions, and Admonitions; I pass now to speak of the Faith and Courage of those that were Instrumental in Saving and Preserving of* Moses life.]

Faith, though it follow not Generation, but Regeneration, is begotten in us, not by the Father of our Flesh, but of our Spirit; Yet it is no small benefit sure to be born of Faithful and Pious Parents. Our Fathers Faith, Though it bring us not to Heaven, will yet protect us from many dangers here on Earth; and blessings are promised, *Psal.* 112. 2. to be entail'd in the Generation of the Faithful.

Never had *Isaac* had a Being, had not the quick and lively Faith of his Father *Abraham*, assisted with that of his Mother *Sarah*, quickned their dead and decrepit bodies to beget and conceive him. And *Moses*'s Being, had soon been at an end, had not his Father *Amram*'s Faith, assisted with that of his Mother *Jochebed*, stirred them up Couragiously, and sans fear of the Kings displeasure, to use their best endeavour to preserve his Life. By Faith *Moses*, said our Apost. *v.* 23. when he was born, was hid three Months of his Parents, because they saw that he was a proper Child, &c.

Amram being sprung from that Tribe, *unto whom God had committed the keeping of his Oracles, the Tribe of* Levi, and keeping in good remembrance the Promise that he had made unto *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 13. *viz.* that after four hundred years bondage in a strange Land, he would bring up his seed, greatly enriched with substance. And knowing that this time drew nigh, yea, being told, said *Josephus*, That he who would break *Egypts* yoak, and ease *Israels* shoulders from bearing of heavy burdens, should spring from his Loins.

But

But looking, as ſaid a better Author, and our Apoſtle here, v. 23. with the Eye of Faith on the goodly and well proportioned Limbs, on the Sweet and Majeſtick Face of this new-born, ſqualing, ſprauling Infant, he began to conceive in his Mind, That God had not not made this curious Cabinet, but for the holding of ſome rich and precious Jewel, and that this fair and well proportioned Body, was to be but the caſe of a more fair and well diſpoſed Mind. And ſome ſmall ſparks of hope began hereupon to kindle in his Breaſt, that this was he whom God had appointed to break *Egypts* yoak, and to bring up the Children of *Iſrael* from the Houſe of bondage. And therefore he is reſolved, notwithſtanding the Kings expreſs Command to kill, to uſe his beſt endeavour to preſerve his Sons life.

Abraham is ſaid by our Apoſtle here, *v.* 17. to have manifeſted his Faith, by reſolving to kill his Son: and *Amram* is here ſaid, *v.* 23. to have manifeſted his Faith, by reſolving to preſerve the life of his Son. So variouſly, and after ſuch divers manners, doth the ſame good Spirit of God work by one and the ſame inſtrument.

But *Amram*'s Faith which at the firſt charge fearleſs ſtood the ſhock of the Kings fury, after a three months Seige, begins to faint and craves for a Parly. And thus Reaſon begins to ſhake the Fort of his Reſolution, and to perſwade him to yield. Further, O *Amram*, to defer the Execution of the Kings Command, the killing of thy Son, will but increaſe thy fear, and prolong his miſery. The ſearching Eye of the Kings Inquiſitors, or the tatling Tongue of a falſe Friend, or treacherous Servant will ſhortly diſcover him, and then with his, thou wilt hazard thine own life alſo; at leaſt wilt looſe that which moſt men count the life of their life, thy Goods, and Eſtate, and have them Confiſcated. Better then to put an end unto his miſeries, and thine own fears, by his ſpeedy Death, then to prolong both by a concealed, and little better than dead Life.

Thus

Thus Reason assaults, and with such good success, that Faith is fain to retreat, and leave the Field: And *Amram* notwithstanding his first brave defence, is resolved to yield, and no longer to conceal his Son.

But though *Amram*'s Faith hath left the Field, yet she hath a small Citadel in his Heart, which she still straitly maintains; and though *Amram* be resolved no longer to conceal his Son, yet he will not so speedily kill him as Reason perswades: His Faith had still so much life left, as to assure him that the Child had another Father, who had a larger share in him than he had, and was able to do more for him than he could. And councels him, since he distrusts his own Power, as too weak to preserve him, to cast him wholly upon Gods Care and Providence.

Thus Reason, notwithstanding his first good success is forced again to retire, and *Amram* is resolved to deliver his Son from out of his own Hands into Gods. His curious and Gold-enameld Cradle, he changeth into a rushy and dirt-dawbed Ark. And *Moses* is cast out from his Natural Fathers House, and his perfum'd upper Chamber, into the great Lower-House of his Spiritual Father, and laid among the Flags by the River.

In the History indeed of which *Moses* himself was the Penman; the contriving and executing of the means for his persecution are wholly ascribed unto his Mother, and there is no mention at all made of his Father. But though his Mother appeared Chief in the Execution, yet his Father doubtless sate President of the Council and chiefly contrived the means for his preservation.

In perilous times wherein Tyrants make their Will their Law, and it is no less than a mans Life and Liberty is worth, to cross their Decrees: Women (as being less to be feared) take more liberty to act in publick than men dare do. Though his Mother *Jochebed* then appeared most in the execution of the means for her Sons preservation; yet *Amram* was not wanting in contributing his utmost endeavours thereunto. I am sure the Apostle hath made them

them joynt partners in their Sons preſervation; and tells us, *v.* 23. that he was preſerved by the Faith of his Parents. *By Faith Moſes*, &c.

To *Amram* therefore, as the Head and Chief (ſince he is now paſt the fear of *Pharaoh*'s Anger) do I aſcribe the uſing of the means for *Moſes* preſervation.

But doth not *Amram*'s Faith in placing his Son among the Flags, by the River, ſeem to be quite vanquiſh'd and overcome? What? Could he deliver his Son into the Hands of a more cruel Executioner than Water? And could he expect any pity from ſo mercileſs an Element?

His Faith, I confeſs, was now fallen into a deep Swoon, but yet it was not quite gone. The Pitch and Slime wherewith he dawbed over the Bulruſh Ark, wherein he put his Son, to fence it againſt the taking in off watter, and that little Girle which ſits yonder ſo ſadly under a buſh, to watch what would became of him, plainly teſtifies that his Faith was not quite Dead; and that he had ſtill ſome ſmall hope left that his Heavenly Father would ſee to, and provide for him.

And loe God, who never fails to provide for ſuch Children as are by faithful Parents caſt wholly upon his Care and Providence, and who taketh them up ſaith *David*, when their Fathers and Mothers forſake them, takes up this ſimple Soul from out of the duſt, and lifteth up this poor wretched Infant out of the mire, and ſets him among the Princes, even among the Princes of *Zoan*.

For whilſt *Moſes* lay thus forlorn in his Ark of Bulruſhes, ſqualing among the Flags by the River; *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, attended by her Maids of Honour, comes down to waſh herſelf in the River; and eſpying this Ark among the Flags, ſhe ſends for it, and having opened it, ſhe was by the Tears of the ſweet Babe that lay in it, moved to tender Compaſſion towards

wards it, and gave Order to have it tenderly Nurſed; called him, from the Place out of which ſhe drew him, (*Moſes*), and afterwards adopts him for her own Son. Thus *Moſes* hath changed his poor enſlaved Parents for a Noble Princely Name; his Thatch'd Cottage for a ſtately Palace; and inſtead of being brought up, as the *Hebrews* were enforced to bring up their Children, in hard and ſervile Labour, he is Princely educated, and inſtructed, ſaith St. *Stephen*, *in all the Wiſdom and Learning of the* Ægyptians, *Acts* 7. 22.

But though *Moſes* be now Heir to a Crown, the Sun, unto whom the *Egyptians* pay the tribute of their Adorations and Devotions; yet before I preſent him with my humble Duty and Service, he muſt give me leave to pay it firſt where it is moſt juſtly due; and to fall down and adore the incomprehenſible Wiſdom and Power of that God, who ſo fruſtrateth and fools all the Deſigns of worldly wiſe Politicians; that he cauſeth the very ſame Means which they propoſe to themſelves, as the ſureſt and ſafeſt way, to bring to paſs their deſired Ends, to be the very Inſtruments of their Deſtruction and Ruine; and brings his determinate Counſels and Purpoſes to paſs, not only againſt their minds, but even by the very Means of thoſe that are his greateſt Enemies and Oppoſers.

What ſurer Plot could the Devil with his *Jewiſh* Conſiſtory of Prieſts and Elders contrive for the keeping of *Jeſus* from being King of the *Jews*, than to accuſe him of Treaſon againſt *Cæſar*, and to deliver him up into the hands of *Marius Pilatus*, the Roman Governor of *Judea*? And yet this very Plot of theirs doth God by his all-working and all-ruling Providence convert unto Chriſt's greater Glory, and eaſier Dominion thereby to extend not only over the whole Region of *Judea*, but over all the Kingdoms of the World, and

nd to have *the Heathen given him for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession.*

What better course could *Joseph*'s Brethren have pitch'd on, for the preventing of their foretold Homage unto him, than to make a Slave of him, and to sell him to the *Ismaelites?* And yet this enslaving of their Brother, doth God by a strange kind of Providence, convert to his Honour and their Shame; brings him hereby to be Lord of all *Egypt*, and them to come and bow down and kneel before him.

What more Mischievous way could *Haman* invent to be revenged on *Mordecai* for contemning his Honour, than to procure a Decree from the King for the utter Extirpation of the *Jewish* Nation? And yet doth God by a wonderful and an unparallell'd piece of Providence convert this Design of his to *Mordecai*'s Exaltation, and his own Destruction.

What wiser Course could *Pharaoh* and his Princes of *Zoan* have lighted upon, for the prevention of *Israels* Deliverance from out of their Bondage, by one that should spring from their own Stock, (as was foretold them by their Magicians) than by issuing such a Command, That all the *Hebrew* Male Children should as soon as born, be slain? And yet doth God by his Wonder-working Power and Wisdom, cause that very Hebrew Male-Child whom he had made choice of, for *Israels* Saviour, and *Egypts* Scourge, to be adopted by his own Daughter, and bred up in his own Court.

So foolish are the wise of this World, when they sit in Council against Wisdom it self, that their own Politick Engines undermine and blow up themselves. And so weak are all the Mighty of the World, when they come to grapple with the Almighty, that their Swords drop out of their hands, and run into their own Bowels; and he makes them become

come the fatal Executioners of their own Deſtruction and Ruine; and hence is, as it is written, *Prov.* 21. 30. *no Wiſdom, nor Counſel, nor Underſtanding againſt the Lord. He purpoſeth, and who can diſannul it? He ſtretcheth out his hand, and who can turn it back?* demands the Prophet, *Iſa.* 14. 27.

Surely theſe ſtrange and wondrous Works which God brings to paſs, not only againſt the Minds, but even by the very Means of thoſe that ſeek to hinder and oppoſe him, are able to make a prophane and blaſphemous Atheiſt turn holy Anchoret, and ſpend his whole Life in admiring and adoring his incomprehenſible Wiſdom and Power; and ſhould make a Chriſtian and true Believer, ſuch an one as owns him for his God and Saviour, confident, in all dangers, of his Almighty Protection, and aſſured that all things, even the moſt Malicious Plots, the Deviliſh Devices, and the moſt Injurious Actions of his moſt Spiteful Enemies, ſhall in the end turn to his Gain and Advantage.

Having thus paid my Homage and Duty, where it was moſt juſtly due, unto that Almighty Three in One, who thus wondrouſly advanced *Moſes*, from the Margin of the Grave, to the Skirts of the Throne:

I come now to pay it to this young Prince, the Adopted Heir of *Egypts* Crown.

But be not miſtaken, *Moſes*, 'tis not to the Tiſſued Suit, and Purple Robe that thou weareſt on thy Back; but to the Golden Soul that harbours in thy Breaſt, that I come to pay my Dutiful and Loyal Reſpects unto. Let thy *Egyptian* Subjects praiſe thy comely Feature, thy Majeſtick Look, thy Princely Deportment, and thy Heroick Acts: 'Tis thy Faith, thy Faith, which I have choſen for my *Encomium* and *Panegyrick*.

And O thou Almighty, Three in One, ſo enable me to ſing of it, that I may make thy *Moſes* as famous among Chriſtians for his Righteouſneſs of Faith, as ever he was among the Jews for his Works of the Law. The Jewiſh Rabbins report of *Moſes*, that when the Courtiers of *Pharaoh* were on a time ſporting with the Child in the Bed-chamber of his Daughter, they preſented to his choice an Ingot of Gold in the one Hand, and a burning Coal in the other; and that the Child ſnatcht at the Coal of Fire and clapt it into his Mouth, and therewith ſo ſing'd and parch'd his Tongue, that he ever after ſtammered in his Speech.

The clapping of the burning Coal into his Mouth, might, I grant, cauſe the ſtuttering of his Tongue, and the ſlowneſs of his ſpeech; for he was by his own Confeſſion, *Exod* 4. 10. no ready Spokeſman. But, ſure I am, that his preferring in his choice the burning cole before the Ingot of Gold, was a moſt evident prediction of his contempt of Worldly wealth and glory. And of that fiery zeal which towards the glory of God, and the good of his Church, burned in his Breaſt.

No ſooner was *Moſes* in *Pharaohs* Court come to years of diſcretion, but he begins to call to mind that he was by nature, and Nation, an *Hebrew*, one that had right by Faith to the Promiſes of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven; and was only by Adoption the Son of *Pharaohs* Daughter, and Heir of *Egypt* Crown, and ſeriouſly conſiders with himſelf whether it were not better for him to ſuffer a light and momentary affliction, with his natural Brethren the *Hebrews* for a while here, and to be made partaker with them of an everlaſting weight of glory hereafter: than with his Adopted Brethren, the *Egyptians*, to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, and afterwards to be caſt into a Lake of everlaſting burning and torment.

Had this choice been put to ſome profane and unbelieving Atheiſt, to one who looks not beyond the Moon, and hath no hopes

hopes of joy but only in this present World; he would soon have concluded that it was better to side with the prosperous *Egyptians*, than with the afflicted *Hebrews*. That a bird in the Hand was worth two in the Bush. The possession of a Cottage to be preferred before the reversion of a Kingdom.

Had it been proposed to some greedy Epicure, who is all for present pleasure, and hath his Stomach so sharp set, that he cannot stay till the banquet be prepared and all the guests come, he would without any demur have given in his verdict, That it was much better to enjoy *Egypts* present portion of Pleasure, than to wait for *Israels* future one.

Had it been proposed to some delicate tender-fingred Courtier, one that hates Labour and loves Ease and Idleness, riseth against Dinner, plays till Supper, drinks till Midnight, and whores till Morning; he would soon have satisfied his Judgment, that it was much better to sit frolicking in *Pharaoh's* Palace, by a warm Fire, or Wine, and Junkets, than to stand smarting in a Sulphury Brick-kiln, among the enslaved *Israelites*, with bitter Taunts and more bitter blows.

Had it been proposed to some fickle complying Time-server, who Weather-cock-like beaks always fair towards the Wind, keeps still on that warm-side of the Sun, holds ever with the strongest Party; and is resolved to keep his Goods and Body safe, what ever becomes of his Soul: he would soon have been won to deal with the afflicted *Israelites*, as *Demas* did with the persecuted St. *Paul*, have forsaken them, and embraced the society and fellowship of the prosperous *Egyptians*. Such timerous Time-serving, complying men, may I grant, love God, and Godliness well; but they love Women, and Gain much better; and there when it comes to the push, they will rather part with God, and a good Conscience, then loose any thing by them.

But

But *Moſes* was otherwiſe Principled, and having an Eye in his Head that looked beyond the viſible things which are Temporal; a Heart in his Breaſt, which had reſpect unto the future Recompence, and great Reward, that is laid up for all Faithful and Pious Souls in Heaven, he abandons all his Earthly Titles and Honours, and prefers the ſtile and Title of Gods Son, before that of *Pharaohs* Daughter; forſakes all the glittering Pomp and Vanity of the World, the ſinful Luſts and Pleaſures of the Fleſh; *And choſeth rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, &c.*

I know, if you look upon this act of *Moſes* with a natural Eye, you will be apt to cenſure him for a man beſides himſelf, and little better than Mad; but though *Moſes* ſeemed to be Mad in ſo doing, yet he ſeems Mad as *David* did at *Gath*, *Regi Achis*, to none but Fools and Mad-men.

Surely they who have the Eyes of their underſtanding enlightned, to ſee but a glimpſe of that exceeding weight of Glory, which God hath prepared in Heaven for thoſe that ſuffer patiently, and with an humble ſubmiſſion to his good pleaſure and providence, *a light and momentary affliction here on Earth*; and to behold that Kingly eſtate and dignity, unto which Chriſt will exalt all theſe in Heaven that ſuffer with him, and for his ſake here on Earth; will not for ſo doing condemn him for a Madman and a Fool, but highly applaud him for a Wiſeman and a Faithful. For by ſo doing he plainly manifeſted that he looked not on the the Temporal things which are viſible, but on the Eternal ones which are inviſible. And it was, ſaith our Apoſtle, *through Faith that* Moſes *when he came to age, &c. Chooſing rather, &c.*

But did not *Moſes* in this his voluntary chooſing of affliction, and running himſelf Headlong into danger, tempt God, and Sin? Is not Man a weak frail Creature, unable of himſelf to withſtand the leaſt temptation, or to ſtand under the lighteſt Load

Load of Affliction? And hath not our great General Christ Jesus, not only taught us by his own Example, *John* 8. *ult.* to Shun and Avoid danger? But also enjoyned us by his Precept, to Pray that we be kept from Temptation, and to be delivered from Evil?

Though to run Headlong into danger and wilfully to draw trouble upon himself, be not the part of a Wise and Prudent Man, yet bravely to own and bear Affliction when it is laid upon him, is the part of a True Christian man, and good Souldier of Jesus Christ.

Basely to deny his Master when the owning of him was the way to bring him into trouble, was not the Wisdom and Piety, but the Folly and Sin of St. *Peter*, and that which cost him a Flood of Tears to Lament; and it was by their bold owning of Christ, when Persecutors Thirsted as greedily after the Blood of Saints, as ever did hungry Evening Wolves after Lambs Blood, that won the Noble Army such Honour and Renown.

When Gods People are in Bondage, his Church under Persecution, it is not then put to our Choice, whether we will suffer with them; but whether we will be of them. For if we be of them, we cannot chuse but suffer with them. It being with the Member of Christs Mystical Body, the Church, as with the Members of a Natural Body: If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it: That Member of the Natural Body is Dead and Putrified, which is not sensible of the Blows and Thrusts which are given to the rest of the Members; and that Member of Christs Mystical Body, is like the Church of *Sardis*, hath a name that it liveth, but is indeed Dead; which is not moved to Compassion and Passion, at the Sorrows and Sufferings of his Brethren.

It

It is for a Profane and Unnatural *Edomite*, to stand Laughing at the Calamity, and to help to set forward the Sufferings of his Brethren. A true *Israelite* always Sympathizeth in Suffering with his Brethren; is sorry for the Affliction of *Joseph*, and Weeps with them that Weep.

Moses therefore in chusing Affliction with the People and Church of God, when Afflicted and under Persecution, did not Tempt God, but plainly manifested himself to be a True Son of God, and a Faithful Member of his Church.

In time of Peace, when the Sunshine of Prosperity Gileth the Church, when Piety grows into Fashion, and is in great Esteem in the World; every one will be a Professer of it, but when it grows out of Fashion, is esteemed the great Crime of the World, the Sect that is every where spoken against: then then to be a Professer, and Practiser of it, is to manifest a man to be Pious indeed, and the True and Faithful Servant of God.

But why is *Moses* here said by the Apostle to have chosen Affliction? Since it is plain in the History, *Exod.* 2. That he did not Voluntary quit, but was forced through fear to forsake *Pharoahs* Court?

Though his leaving of *Pharoahs* Court, seem indeed to have something of Compulsion in it, yet his going to Visit his brethren, and his looking with a Pitiful and Compassionate Eye on their Afflictions and Sufferings was a free and Voluntary act, and no other thing Constrained him unto it, but the Motion and Inspiration of Gods Holy Spirit, for it came into his heart, said St. *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 23. to go and Visit his brethren.

Had *Moses* been *Egyptianized*, he would when he came and found the *Hebrew* and the *Egyptian* a Fighting, have sided with

with the *Egyptian*, and not with the *Hebrew*. It being as it were Natural to all Renegadoes, and Apostates, to be most cruel towards those of their former Sect and Profession. *Moses* therefore in Smiting the *Egyptian* and Rescuing the *Hebrew*, gave a most Evident Testimony of his Affection towards his Natural Brethren.

And in that particular deliverance he gave them a sign, that he was come to give them a general Gaol-deliverance from *Egypt's* Bondage, and supposed, said *St. Stephen Acts* 7. 25. That his Brethren would have understood by that particular Deliverance, That God by his hand would give them a general Goal-Deliverance.

And surely had the *Israelites* been as willing at that time, to receive him for their Prince and Saviour, as he was forward to offer himself, and had they not scornfully thrust him off, with a *Who made the a Judge, and Ruler over us?* He would have made it most Evident, That he was not Constrayned and Enforced, but Voluntarily, and of his own free Will did chuse rather to suffer Affliction, &c.

You have seen, Brethren, how *Moses* manifested his Faith, even by preferring the future and Eternal Joys of Heaven, before the present Transient Honours, Pleasures, Contentments of an Earthly Crown.

I dare not now oppose him unto you as a Pattern to follow and Imitate, I know your high flown and Gospel Faith, will scorn to stoop to this Low and Legal President.

But sure notwithstanding the great boasting that is now a days made of Faith, my Faith tells me, that the most Faithful man amongst us, comes far short of *Moses*, and that there is Scant a man to be found in those bright Sun shine Days of the Gospel, that is able to give such an evident Demonstration of his

Faith, as *Moses* did here under the Law, *In choosing rather*, &c.

Though we talk not in this Age of Faith, of Faith, and of our Dependance on Future good things, yet as on Sight, on Sight, and in the Enjoyment of the good things that are present, that all our Felicity is Plac'd, and rather then we will suffer a light and Momentary Affliction here to be made partakers of an exceeding weight of Glory hereafter, we will chuse rather on the Wings of a Short-lived Pleasure, and Profit, to be carried into the Infernal Pit of Everlasting Torments.

And though we boast much of the goodness of our sight, and opened eyes, yet that we are blind and cannot see a far of, even beyond this present World, we plainly manifest by our loathness to part with our Earthly Goods and Possessions, for the gaining of a Heavenly Crown and Kingdom.

So far are we from manifesting our Faith, as did *Moses*, by *Choosing rather*, &c. that we esteem no man to be a Child of God that is Afflicted and Persecuted: We usually measure mens goodness, now a days, by their greatness; their Saintship, by their success, and faithlessly think that God loves none but such as he suffers to flourish here in all Worldly wealth and felicity.

Surely did we believe the Holy Scriptures, which for the main are nothing else but a History of the Churches Persecution, but a Martyrology of the Saints Sufferings: And had we hope as we profess, to be Saved by a Poor, Despised, Mocked, Scorned, Scourged, Crucified Saviour: We would entertain a more Honourable Esteem of the Cross, a Nobler Opinion of those whom he is pleased so far to Honour, as to make them his fellow Sufferers and would not with those *Barbarians*. *Acts* 27. 4. Condemn all those for wicked Men, on whose hands we see the Viper of danger to fasten.

Did

Did we believe indeed that there is another World, and were throughly perswaded that after the Dissolution of our Earthly *Tabernacles*, *there is a House not made with hands, prepared for us in Heaven*, we would not by balking the Cross, by complying with the Times, humouring of Men, and making our Religion a State-one, seek to prolong our Life and Liberty here on Earth; but would be ready with St. *Paul*, to run through Persecution of all sorts; yea, to *die daily*, in expectation of that great Reward which is promised, *Matth.* 5. 10. to all *that suffer for Righteousness sake*; and would esteem the Reproaches and Scorns that are cast on us for Christs sake and his Gospel, the greatest Honour that can be done us.

Did we make Gods Word our daily Study, read and remember how it is written there, That Gods People the *Jews*, were after a long and hard Servitude in *Egypt*, set at Liberty, and brought into the Promised Land; and how *Pharaoh* and his Jovial Courtiers, that afflicted and kept them in Bondage, were all either consumed by those heavy Plagues which God sent on their Nation, or drown'd in the *Red Sea*, we would with rather, with poor naked and pained *Lazarus*, to be carried into *Abraham*'s Bosom, than with rich, dainty and delicate *Dives*, to be cast into Hell-Fire; yea, would chuse with *Moses*, *rather*, &c.

Were we indeed true believing Christians, we would not only *live to the Glory of God*, but would also with our brave Leaders the Blessed Apostles, *glory in our Tribulation*, esteem our Sufferings for Christ's Cause, to be the very Marks of the Lord *Jesus*, as termed, *Gal.* 6. 17. our Persecutions for Righteousness sake the Earnest of the Heavenly Crown and Kingdom, *Matth.* 5. 10. our Chastisements for our Sins, to be the very tokens of our Heavenly Fathers love and affection towards us, *Heb.* 12. 6.

Though he be esteemed a happy man, unto whom God gives Riches and Honour, and gives him also power to eat thereof, and Comfortably to Enjoy them: yet he is indeed a happy man, unto whom God gives Trouble and Afflictions, and gives them withall Grace to make good use of them, and to improve them to his Spiritual advantage. And what ever men think of worldly felicity, there is allready no Life so profitable, as that which is a little sprinkled with the Salt of Crosses, and though *Egypt*, and the House of Bondage, be no place for Gods *Israel* to dwell in and inhabit; yet will the serving of an hard Apprenticeship here, make them more highly to prize and esteem the promised *Canaan*.

I know not what cause others may have to hate and hurt their Task-masters and Oppressors, but I find that I have great cause to love and pray for them, yea, in some sort to prefer them before my Friends. My Friends oft entice me out of the Heavenly Rode, into the slippery path of Pleasure; but mine Enemies, Persecutors and Slanderers, make me careful to keep the right way to Heaven, and to take heed that I suffer not my feet to turn either to the right hand or the left, from the Path of Gods Holy Commands, for if I do, I shall be sure to hear of it from them. Though to flow in worldly wealth, to be pointed at with the finger, and to be crouched to by every one, be an estate, which flesh, rebellious flesh would sometimes make me ambitious of; yet when in my Mid-Night thoughts and secret retirements, I seriously consider the deadly poison that lies in the honied Cup of Prosperitie, and the wholsom healthful

Potion,

Potion, that is contained in the *Idea* one of Adversity, it makes me earnestly beseech God, rather to give me a bitter Pill, and to purge me with *Hyssop* that I may clean; than to give me a sugred Potion, and to suffer me to revel in all wordly Felicity; till with *Jesurun* I grow wanton, and kick against him: humbly to beg of him rather to restrain and keep me from future presumptions and sins, by his gentle Chastisements and Corrections, than to let me run headlong into all licentiousness, by his seeming sweet, but cruel indulgence: yea, it makes me wish rather with poor naked and pained *Lazarus*, to be carried into *Abraham's* Bosom, than the rich, dainty and delicate *Dives*, to be cast into Hell-Torments; and makes me to chuse rather with the faithful *Moses* to suffer affliction, *&c.*

Credit me, my Beloved Brethren, the Love and Favour of God, is infinitely better than the love and favour of the world: and the Joys of Heaven are as far above those of Earth in worth as they are in height. And all truly faithful Men, such as have their eyes enlightned to see things afar off; have esteemed it much better to be chastned of the Lord here, and spared hereafter, than spared here and reserved unto the day of Judgment to be punished hereafter; halt and maimed to enter into Life, than whole and found to be cast into Hell. To swim through a boiling River of Brimstone to be eternally happy, than to dwell in a Paradise now, and after death to be damned.

It was the Prayer of St. *August. Lord, here cut, massacre and burn me; so thou wilt hereafter spare and save*

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